

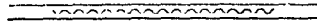
CANADA

A FIELD FOR EMIGRATION

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Factor to the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour, M.P., &c.



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CANADA : A FIELD FOR EMIGRATION.

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Emigration may not be a matter of choice, but to some it is a necessity. The British people, and more especially the Scotch, are found in all parts of the wor^d. It is to be regretted that Dr. Nansen was unable to verify the oft-repeated assertion that a Scotchman is perched on the pinnacle of the North Pole, calmly surveying the surrounding icebergs. Many countries afford attractions for those who have to leave their native land, but, when a Briton is far from the old country, he is pervaded by a feeling of homely security, when he finds himself in one of the colonies, under the shadow of the British flag. While each of the colonies has its advantages and disadvantages, Canada has much to be said in its favour.

Those who can look back to their school days twenty years or more will remember that geography books described the British possessions in North America as consisting of the provinces of Ontario or Upper Canada, Quebec or Lower Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the remainder being comprehended under the general title of the North-west Territory. Although this vast region contains an area six times as large as that of all the provinces above named, it was depicted on the maps of those days in a similar manner to the unexplored interior of Darkest Africa, save for a shading representing the Rocky Mountains and a blue colouring showing the position of several large lakes with long names, which sorely taxed the memory of youthful students. Between the eastern provinces which are thickly wooded, except where cleared, and the Rocky Mountains, lie the open prairies, described by Rudyard Kipling as "a vast expanse of nothingness." The breadth of the prairies from east to west is about 900 miles, and they extend from the United States boundary away to the far north. The area of this immense tract of country, which is usually called in Canada the North-west, including Manitoba, is nearly equal to that of Europe, but the northern portion has a soil too sterile, and a climate too severe, to admit of the successful pursuit of agriculture. Nevertheless the portion of this great territory, which is capable of pro-

ducing crops and affording good pastures, extends to six or seven times the area of the British Isles. The whole of the North-west was placed under the control of the Hudson Bay Company in 1670. This company, by introducing agencies for trading in furs, opened up the country to civilization, and kept order among the Indians for 200 years, when its rights were transferred by act of parliament to the Crown, the company being compensated with grants of land and money. It is remarkable in how many instances British colonies have been opened up by chartered companies. The North-west, along with the other provinces, was in 1867 united into the great Dominion of Canada, which embraces the whole of British North America, with the exception of Newfoundland. This island is still an independent British colony. Before the formation of the great Dominion, these fertile plains were practically a *terra incognita*, inhabited by scattered tribes of Indians, with a few forts of the Hudson Bay Company placed at wide intervals, while large herds of buffalo and antelopes wandered over the prairies. The buffalo is now extinct, but the timid and graceful antelope can still be seen bounding over the plains.

Those who have any desire to emigrate to Canada can have ample opportunities for purchasing or leasing "made" farms in the older settled provinces. The southern portion of Ontario, for instance, has all the characteristics of English scenery. Fields of yellow waving grain, green pastures and neat homesteads are seen through clumps of trees such as the elm, ash, maple, &c. The fields are enclosed, and produce all kinds of cereals and roots, also Indian corn, which grows in great luxuriance to a height of 8 or 9 feet. In the Niagara district the country is divided into orchards, in which are grown those red-cheeked Canadian apples so much appreciated, as well as plums, peaches, vines and other fruits. The appearance of these orchards in full blossom, with the sun shining upon the trees, is extremely picturesque. The farm buildings are of wood. The dwelling houses, which are commodious, being built of red brick, and surrounded by trees and flowers, present a neat and homely aspect. The holdings extend from 100 to 300 acres, and their value depends upon the situation and nature of the soil. Most of the holdings are owned by their occupiers. Some may be obtained on lease. Rents are from 10s. to 12s. and the purchase price from £10 to £25 per acre. In the northern parts of Ontario and other eastern provinces, land may be got for almost nothing where the timber has to be cleared and the soil is not so good. Many pioneers go into these forests, and, after toiling for years, bring the land into condition for producing crops, but life is short, and tree stumps are more difficult to eradicate than couch or thistles. A more immediate return for labour is obtained on the great prairies, where there are no trees and the rich soil is ready for the plough. It was not until about ten years

ago, when the iron road of the Canadian Pacific Railway penetrated through the prairies and over the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast, that the stream of population began to flow westward to take possession of this new country.

The Dominion Government has divided the North-west into several provinces, including Manitoba. It is not many years since Manitoba, erroneously pronounced Mani-to-bā, became a familiar name in this country. It was first known as a place where the settlers lost their fingers and noses by frost bite. In the course of time, however, these maimed warriors sent out so many ship-loads of first-class wheat that crowds of curious people went to see where they got it. Most of those inquirers came to stay, and have since been producing fine samples of No. 1 Fyfe hard for the British markets, much to the annoyance of old country farmers. This province is traversed by numerous branch lines of railway, besides the main trunk road of the Canadian Pacific. The town of Winnipeg, with its 38,000 inhabitants, is the focus of all the railway lines and the commercial centre for the traffic of the North-west. Its broad streets are flanked by substantial buildings of stone and brick, and passengers are conveyed along the busy thoroughfares by electric cars, at a speed more than twice that of the ordinary horse cars of Edinburgh or Glasgow. Almost every house and shop is supplied with electric light and telephone. Altogether, it presents the appearance of a flourishing town. Indeed, in the presence of a Canadian, whom you do not wish to insult, it would be proper to call Winnipeg a city. There are several other towns of considerable importance in Manitoba, such as Portage-la-Prairie, Brandon, &c. These towns are of truly mushroom growth; their sites being marked about ten or twelve years ago by a few tents, but there is little likelihood of their meeting with the fate of Jonah's gourd. Brandon, a town of 6,000 inhabitants, is the centre of the great wheat-growing district.

In the neighbourhood of Brandon are the enormous farms where the plough furrows used to be upwards of four miles long. Most of these farms are now broken up into a number of smaller holdings, as the population is rapidly increasing. A visit to one of these farms is necessary to become convinced of the peculiar properties of the virgin prairie soil. It is a rich black loam, sometimes three or four feet deep. British agriculturists console themselves with the prospect of this virgin soil becoming exhausted, and that then their Canadian brethren will not be able to grow continuous crops of wheat. This time is far distant. The soil and climatic conditions are entirely different from anything seen in Great Britain or even in other parts of Canada. The wheat is of good quality, and ripens rapidly on account of the strong heat of the sun, and the moisture supplied by showers or from the subsoil by the gradual

melting of the ice. The soil has a tendency to become foul with weeds, and most farmers find it best to fallow the land every third year. With this system of two years wheat and one year fallow, it is possible to go on growing wheat for a very long time without manure. Frequently the seed for the following year's crop is sown upon the stubble without ploughing, and simply harrowed in. The produce in some specially fertile spots is phenomenal, but the average is between 20 and 30 bushels per acre. Large crops of oats, barley and roots can also be produced on the prairies. As long as wheat pays, it is less trouble to cultivate it alone. The Manitoban farmer considers that wheat growing pays if he can obtain 50 cents (about 2s.) per bushel. When the price falls to 40 cents or less, as at present, he grumbles very much. The carriage and expenses of conveying wheat from say Brandon to Liverpool, via the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Great Lakes, and New York, is about 43 cents, bringing up the price at Liverpool to 83 cents or 3s. 5d. per bushel. As soon as the wheat is thrashed, it is sent by the farmer or grain merchant to be stored in an elevator until the market is considered favourable for selling. These elevators are huge unsightly erections, 300 to 400 feet long, and 50 or 60 feet high, owned by the railway or other company. Like most things on the other side of the Atlantic, buildings are constructed upon utilitarian rather than artistic principles. These grain stores receive their name from the grain being carried up out of the railway cars on ground floor to the top by revolving elevators. There it is weighed and sent into bins 50 feet deep. When removed it is again elevated to the top and re-weighed, then sent down in wide iron spouts projecting over the cars or the hold of the steamers. In this way a large steamer can be loaded in a few hours.

The greater part of Manitoba has been taken up by settlers, but free grants of land can easily be obtained in the provinces of Assiniboia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, where the soil is well adapted for growing wheat and for mixed farming generally. The elevation of the prairie slightly increases towards the Rocky Mountains, and the branch of agriculture suited for this district is grazing. For hundreds of miles around the town of Calgary, the country is occupied by horse and cattle ranches. The grass has a dried up and wiry appearance, and might be looked upon by an old country farmer as poor grazing. On closer examination of the numerous herds of cattle, he would become convinced that there is something peculiarly nutritious about these pastures which can bring cattle up to such high condition without any other feeding. The breeds of cattle in Canada are kept up to a high standard by the use of well-bred short-horn, Hereford, Ayrshire, and other bulls.

It is not many years since we obtained a State Department in agriculture. Canada has had its Minister of Agriculture for a very long time, and Government experimental farms have been established at intervals across the continent in order to prove what crops and breeds of stock are suitable for each district. These farms are of immense benefit in a new country of such a wide extent. They are visited by hundreds of farmers every year. The Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa is thoroughly equipped with agricultural, chemical, botanical and horticultural departments, and the director and other officials, who are enthusiasts in their profession, willingly explain to innumerable visitors the experiments which are being conducted. The Government of Ontario has established an agricultural college at Guelph, which, with its magnificent buildings, experimental plots, highly bred stock of all kinds, and large dairy, far surpasses any technical agricultural college in Great Britain. With reference to obtaining a free grant of land, the Dominion Government will grant 160 acres to any man on payment of a nominal fee, and upon his observing certain conditions as to residence, etc. He is said to "homestead" the land, and, upon his fulfilment of these conditions, he becomes absolute owner. To begin to make a living upon a homestead, however fertile the soil may be, a small amount of capital is necessary. £200 or £300 should go a long way. He must build a small hut and stable and purchase a team of horses, etc., and have sufficient to keep him living for a few months. He can grow in the first summer sufficient oats and hay to keep his stock during the first winter, and, with one or two cows, poultry, pigs and potatoes, he can soon make at least a living off the land. Every year he increases the acreage under crop by breaking up the fertile prairie which is ready for the plough. This is no imaginary picture, but what is actually being done. Instances are met with where a man having come up from the States, conveying his family and whole chattels in a wagon, has in a few years been able not only to cultivate his 160 acres, but to rent more land in the neighbourhood, held by a company or non-resident owner.

Reports concerning the climate of Canada may possibly prevent many emigrants from wending their way thither. There is no doubt that the winter in the North-west is intensely cold, but it is the universal testimony of those who have lived long in Manitoba and the North-west, that the keenness of the frost is not felt in the same way as in this country. After the snow falls, the sun shines brightly during the day through a clear and bracing atmosphere, which has an exhilarating effect. Search may be made in vain for people who have lost their noses. For the most part of the season, from April to November, the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold. The gay clothing and cheerful bearing of the people

are a contrast to what is seen in Scotland, where the inhabitants acquire a sombre aspect, doubtless from the fact that the sun is so frequently obscured by clouded skies. The climate of Canada, with its alternation of winter and summer, must be more healthy than that of the great African continent, towards which many young men will be turning their eyes, and the country is outside the zone of blizzards and cyclones, which cause such destruction in the United States.

The consideration of the question who should emigrate is one for the Dominion Government and emigration agents. The more important matter for those who are looking for a field less crowded than Great Britain wherein to discover a means of subsistence, is, who should not emigrate? Canada itself supplies men for the literary professions, clerks are a drug in the market, and there are not many openings for mechanics. The chief industry by which a livelihood can be made is agriculture. A young man who goes out to take up a free grant of land need not be a son of the soil, if only he is willing to work and to rough it for a time. He should on no account purchase or lease land before being at least a year in the country. The conditions of agriculture are so different from those of the old country that the most experienced find that they require to learn the best methods. Employment can easily be got on a farm in the west, where a man can become initiated into the ways of the country. It is obvious that a young man who has never engaged in manual labour is unfit for this line of life, unless he has a good constitution and goes out young. The Canadians have no respect for the tenderfoot, or for the still more objectionable emigrant, whom they entitle the dude.

The Yankee never wearies in employing all his eloquence to convince the incredulous Briton that the United States of America is the greatest country in the world. Perhaps, if this postulate were granted, he might condescend to admit that Canada comes next. Certainly Canada is just in its infancy. Its resources only await development, and its vast territory is capable of supporting a large population. The mineral wealth of British Columbia will yet to some extent rival the riches of the South African gold fields. The first essentials of prosperity—namely, security of life and prosperity—exist in the most outlying spots. Education is kept up to a high standard. Indeed the school buildings, both in regard to expense of structure and number, appear to be overdone. It is remarkable how rapidly the school, the church, the railway, and everything which goes to enhance the comforts and amenities of life, follow the settler away out into the solitudes of the prairie. A few discontented spirits cast a longing glance towards Washington, but the majority of Canadians are intensely loyal, and are indignant at the suggestion that they would be benefited by union with the United States.

Whittinghame.

E. HEDLEY SMITH.

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Mr. JOHN DYKE, 15, Water-street, Liverpool.

Mr. THOMAS GRAHAME, 40, St. Enoch-square, Glasgow.

Mr. W. STUART, Nethy-bridge, Inverness.

Mr. P. FLEMING, 44, High-street, Dundee.

Mr. ERNEST WOOD, 79, Hagley-road, Birmingham.

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